Ride On
Public Participation Plan

December 2014

Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Division of Transit Services

Rockville, Maryland

Accessible Formats

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1. Overview and Recommendations

The purpose of the Ride On Public Participation Plan is to assure and improve access to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Division of Transit Services decision-making process for low income, minority and limited English proficient (LEP) populations. Ride On's Public Participation Plan is intended to comply with FTA requirements as described in Section 4.

The recommendations for Ride On's PPP come from the Ride On on-board survey and WMATA Speak Up Its your Ride Survey. The recommendations include:

- Use multiple methods including electronic communication via the website, email, Facebook and twitter to communicate with transit customers. Written notices on transit vehicles and at stations can be effective and are also recommended.

- Expand email lists for transit customers. Allow customers to add their names to the email lists by affirmative request and to easily remove themselves from the email lists.

- Enlist Community Based Organizations (Appendix B) in a campaign by the Division of Transit Services and METRO to provide regular contact with minority and low income communities. Transit information should be provided to each organization and the Division of Transit Services and Metro should maintain communication with the CBOs through regular email newsletters.

- Use electronic communication for service and policy decisions and community meetings in order to receive greater levels of public participation. Low-income and LEP populations participation requires multiple alternative communication strategies and traditional public hearings / meetings are not effective in reaching these populations.

- Meet people where they are including neighborhood associations, Community based organizations, community events, and pop-up events at transit stations.

- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity. Know your audience and bring the appropriate staff (subject matter, cultural and linguistic expertise) to events and meetings.

- Show the public their feedback is utilized.

- Make it convenient to attend events.

- Translate materials and use graphics. Informational materials should be available in the target population's native language and should be designed to have graphics and minimal text.

2. Montgomery County Transit Services

Montgomery County is located in Maryland northwest of the Washington, D.C. It is Maryland's most populous county with a 2010 population of 971,777. Ride On is a local transit service owned and operated by Montgomery County. Since starting as a feeder bus service to Washington's Metro, Ride On has grown to its current 281 peak vehicles on 78 different bus routes. On an average weekday, Ride On carries 88,370 riders and operates 2,591 revenue hours.

Montgomery County is served by multiple transit agencies. The Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) provides rapid rail service with the Red Line and local bus services on 17 bus lines. Through Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the MARC provides commuter rail services. The MTA Commuter Bus program also provides commuter bus services while Ride On provides local and express bus services. Figure 1 on the following page illustrates the public transportation services in the County as of May 2014.

3. Public Participation Responsibilities

Montgomery County is committed to providing inclusive public participation for all of the county services and programs provided to Montgomery County citizens. For the Ride On transit program, public participation responsibilities are shared among county departments and offices. Public participation responsibilities include:

MCDOT – Division of Transit Services - The MCDOT - Division of Transit Services through the Marketing and Service Planning Units have the primary responsibilities for developing the Public Participation Plan; conducting outreach to minority, low-income and LEP communities; organizing and conducting public participation activities for the Ride On fare policy and major service changes; and marketing Ride On services.

Montgomery County Public Information Office - The Montgomery County Office of Public Information (MCOPI) handles media inquiries and processes press releases for Ride On and other county divisions and departments. The MCOPI consists of a Media Relations section that works with the news media to inform residents about the programs and services available to them. A Publications and Graphics section provides graphical support to the office and oversees the content and design of the County web site so that it is informative and easy to navigate. A Cable Programming section produces cable television shows for the Executive branch of County government on cable channel 6 – County Cable Montgomery, as well as video interviews and announcements for Ride On e.g. the "Meet The MARC" marketing campaign.

MC311 - MC311, the County's Customer Service Center, is where residents can call or go online to find information or submit service requests (compliments, complaints, concerns, etc.). MC311 provides the following features:

- 311 allows customers to call one easy-to-remember number to access Montgomery County information and services.
- Customers can also access information and create or track service requests on the website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/311.
- Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The call center is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.
- Trained representatives who speak Spanish are available, as is a language interpretation service for other languages.
- TTY is available by calling 301-251-4850.
- Customer service representatives and the online system use a state-of-the-art database of information and services about County government that can be continually updated so the most current facts are available.
- The 311 system can quickly incorporate real time information in the event of a community event/emergency, like a water main break, H1N1 flu epidemic or weather-related incident.
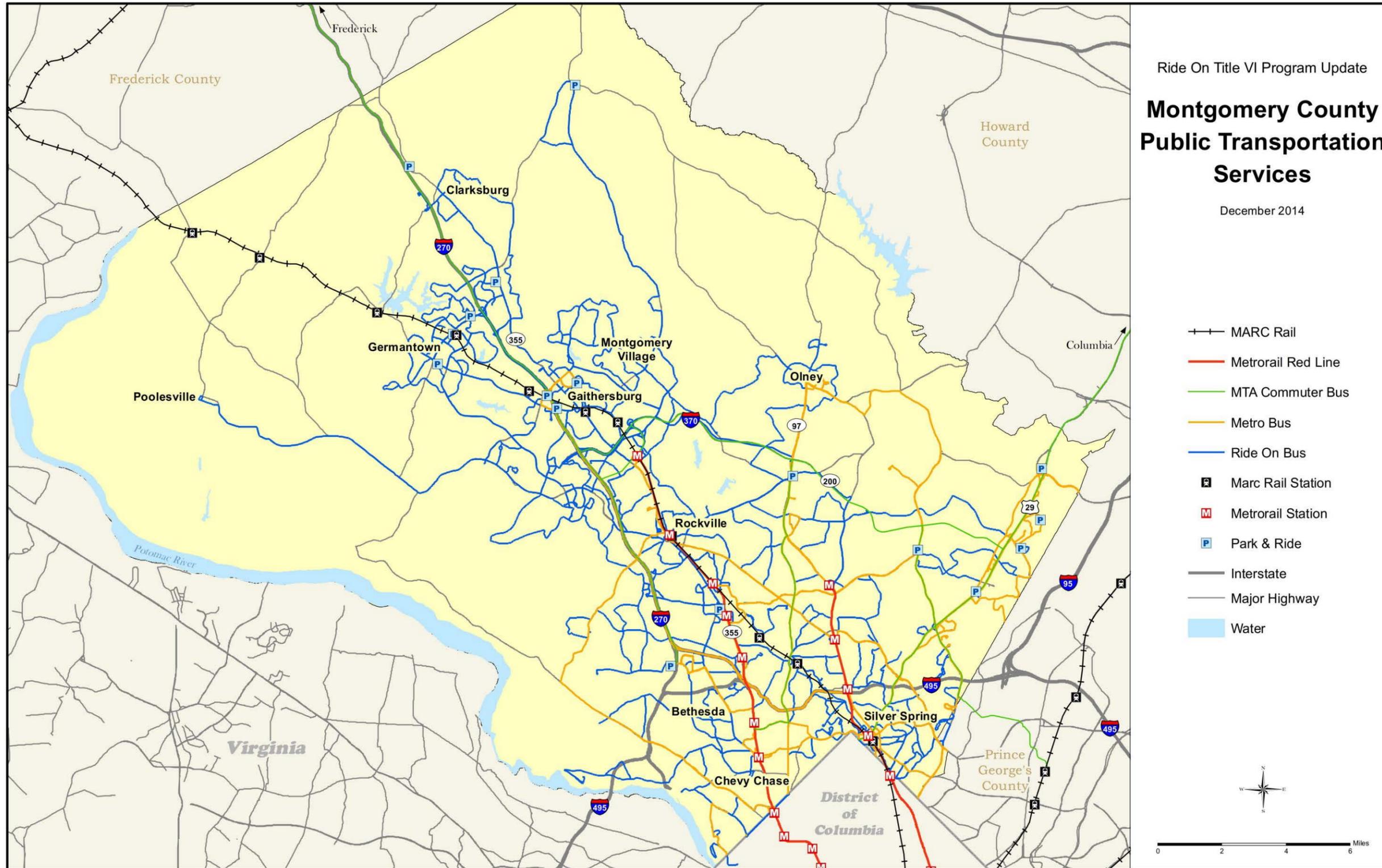
Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships - The mission of the Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) is to strengthen relationships between the Montgomery County government and the residents it serves, with special focus on underserved and emerging communities and our neighbors in need. The OCP serves as a bridge builder between the County government and community organizations serving the residents of Montgomery County, working across the barriers of race, ethnicity, income, and religion that too often diminish communities. OCP's mission is to carry out the County Executive's commitment to build a larger policy table with participation by a more diverse range and greater number of residents as we work to become America's most welcoming community. The OCP has liaison representatives serving the following communities: African American, African and Caribbean, Asian, Faith, Latino, Middle Eastern, and Seniors.

MCDOT Community Outreach Unit - The MCDOT Community Outreach unit exists to inform communities of major transportation programs and services, solicit community comment on transportation policies and needs, resolve citizen issues concerning safety or service delivery needs, and coordinate pedestrian safety education, enforcement, and engineering work to achieve the County Executive's announced Pedestrian Safety Initiative.

Figure 1: Montgomery County Public Transportation Services

Ride On Title VI Program Update

Montgomery County Public Transportation Services

December 2014

Legend:
- MARC Rail
- Metrorail Red Line
- MTA Commuter Bus
- Metro Bus
- Ride On Bus
- Marc Rail Station
- Metrorail Station
- Park & Ride
- Interstate
- Major Highway
- Water

4. Federal Requirements

Federal Transit Administration regulations require inclusive public participation in transportation decision making. These requirements are contained in multiple circulars that apply to Montgomery County's transit services including:

- FTA C 4702.1B, **Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients**,
    - Chapter 3, paragraph 8, **Promoting Inclusive Public Participation**
    - Chapter 2, paragraph 9, **Requirement to Provide Meaningful Access to LEP Persons**.
- FTA C 4703.1, **Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients**.
- 49 U.S.C. Sections 5307(b) which requires programs of projects to be developed with public participation and 5307(c)(1)(I) which requires a locally developed process to consider public comment before raising a fare or carrying out a major reduction in transportation service.
- Executive Order 13166, "**Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency**" (65 FR 50121, Aug. 11, 2000), which requires that recipients shall take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are limited-English proficient (LEP).

This Ride On Public Participation Plan is intended to document Montgomery County's activities to meet or exceed these federal requirements.

5. Public Participation Plan Goals

The Division of Transit Services endeavors to provide meaningful opportunities for the public to assist staff in identifying social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed transportation decisions. This includes input from low income, minority and limited English proficient populations.

Specific goals and outcomes include:

- **Quality Input and Participation –** Comments received by Division of Transit Services are useful, relevant and constructive, contributing to better plans, projects, strategies and decisions.
- **Consistent Commitment** – Division of Transit Services staff communicates regularly, develops trust with communities and builds community capacity to provide public input.
- **Diversity** – Participants represent a range of socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural perspectives, with representative participants including residents from low income neighborhoods, ethnic communities and residents with limited English proficiency.
- **Accessibility –** Effort is made to ensure that opportunities to participate are accessible physically, geographically, temporally, linguistically and culturally.
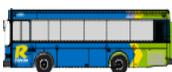
- **Relevance** – Issues are framed in such a way that the significance and potential effect is understood by participants.
- **Participant Satisfaction** – People who take the time to participate feel it is worth the effort to join the discussion and provide feedback.
- **Clarity in Potential for Influence** – The process clearly identifies and communicates where and how participants can have influence and direct impact on decision-making.

Division of Transit Services' public participation activities are based on the following principles:

- **Flexible** – The engagement process accommodates participation in a variety of ways and is adjusted as needed.
- **Inclusive** – Division of Transit Services proactively reaches out and engages low income, minority and LEP populations.
- **Respectful**— All feedback received is given careful and respectful consideration.
- **Tailored** – Division of Transit Services' public participation methods are tailored to match local and cultural preferences as much as possible.
- **Trustworthy** – Information provided is accurate and trustworthy.
- **Responsive** – Division of Transit Services strives to respond to and incorporate appropriate public comments into transportation decisions.

5. Population Demographics

Minority Populations

Using the 2010 census the Division of Transit Services has utilized GIS to estimate the numbers of persons in Montgomery County that are within the transit service area for the Ride On and Metro Bus services. As shown in Table 1, for the entire county, minorities comprise 50.7 percent of the population while in the combined Ride On / Metro Bus transit service area, minorities represent 52.4 percent of the population.

Table 1: Montgomery County Minority Population

	Total Population	Minority Population	Non-Minority Population	Percent Minority
Montgomery County	971,777	493,012	478,765	50.7%
Transit Service Area	854,312	447,350	406,962	52.4%
% of population within transit service area	87.9%	90.7%	85.0%	

Figure 2 illustrates the minority populations served by the Ride On and Metro Bus transit services.
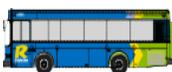
Figure 2: Montgomery County Minority Population Concentrations
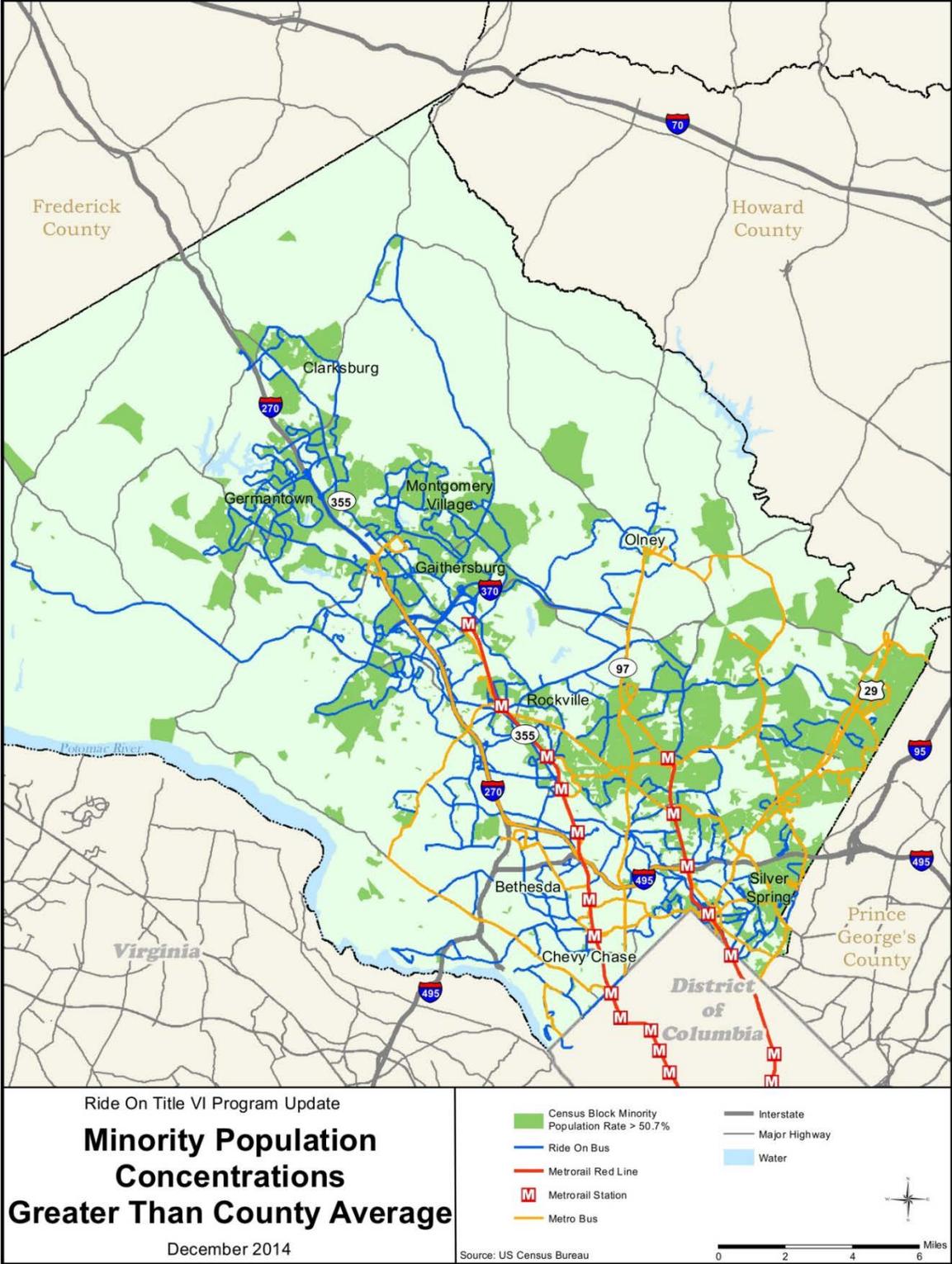
Low Income Populations

Figure 3 illustrates the low-income populations served by the Ride On and Metro Bus transit services.

Figure 3: Low Income Population Concentrations

Ride On Title VI Program Update

Percent of Households Below Poverty Level By Census Block Group

December 2014

% of Households < Poverty Level
- 0-10%
- 10.1-20%
- 20.1-30%
- 30.1-40%
- > 1/4 Mile From Public Transit

— Ride On Bus
— Metrorail Red Line
M Metrorail Station
— Metro Bus
— Interstate
— Major Highway
Water

Source: US Census Bureau
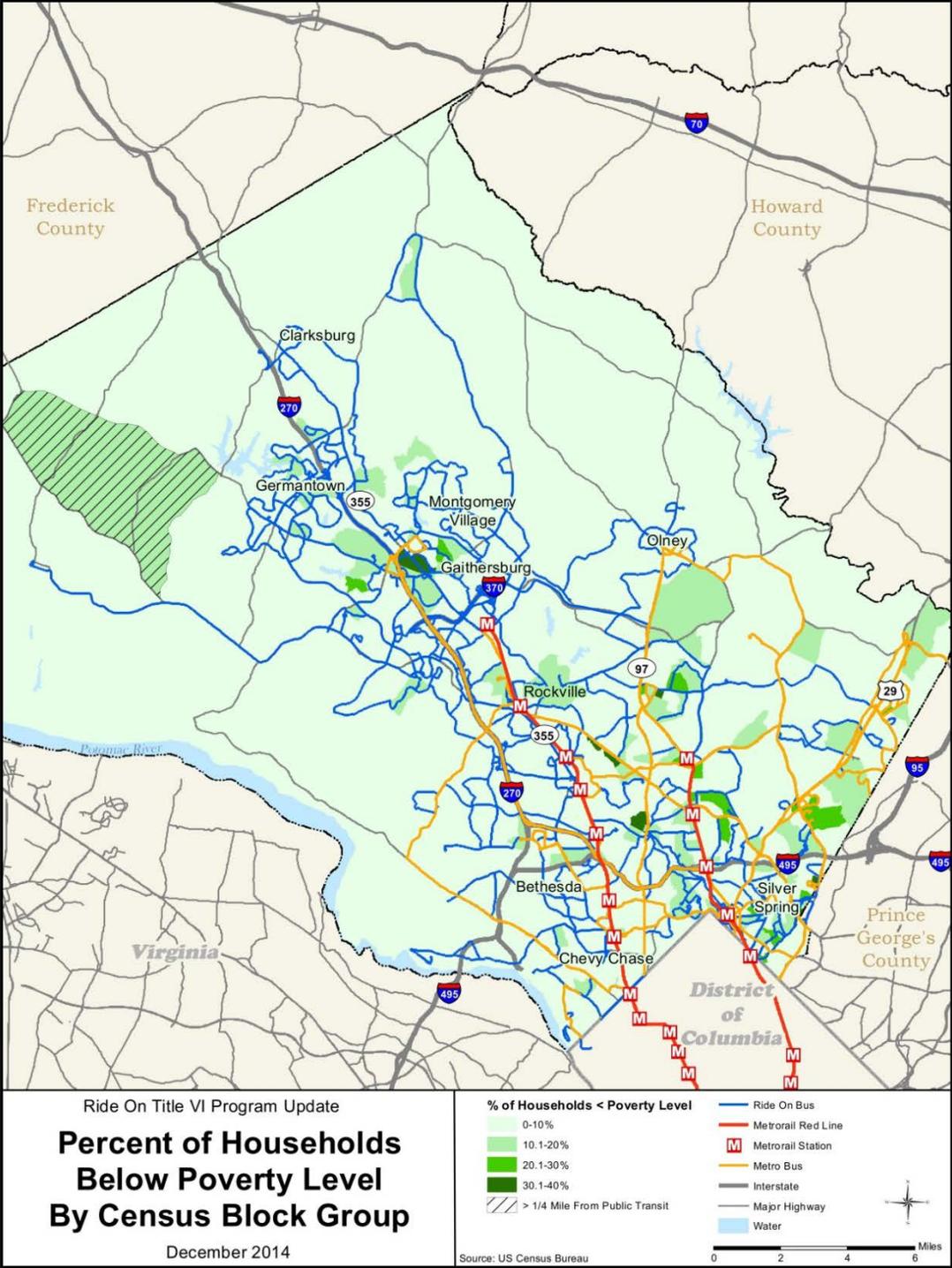
Limited English Proficiency Populations

The United States Census' most recent American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year estimates (2008-2012) offer a current and reliable estimate of the number, proportion, and geographic distribution of LEP persons in the Ride On service area. This analysis of LEP individuals uses data estimates for the "county subdivision" census-defined areas (shown in Figure 4). The county subdivision geography was chosen because the estimates at this level provide the best balance between detail and statistical significance of the data.

According to the ACS (2008-2012), of the total Montgomery County population over the age of five (910,751):

- approximately 39% (352,000) speak a language other than English at home;
- approximately 15% (139,000) speak English less than "very well"; and
- approximately 9% (83,500) speak English "not well" or "not at all".

Figure 4, shows that the highest concentrations of linguistically isolated households[1] are located in and around the Germantown/Gaithersburg area in the center of the county and the Wheaton-Glenmont/College Park area just north of Washington, D.C.

Figure 4: Percent Linguistically Isolated Households, Montgomery County

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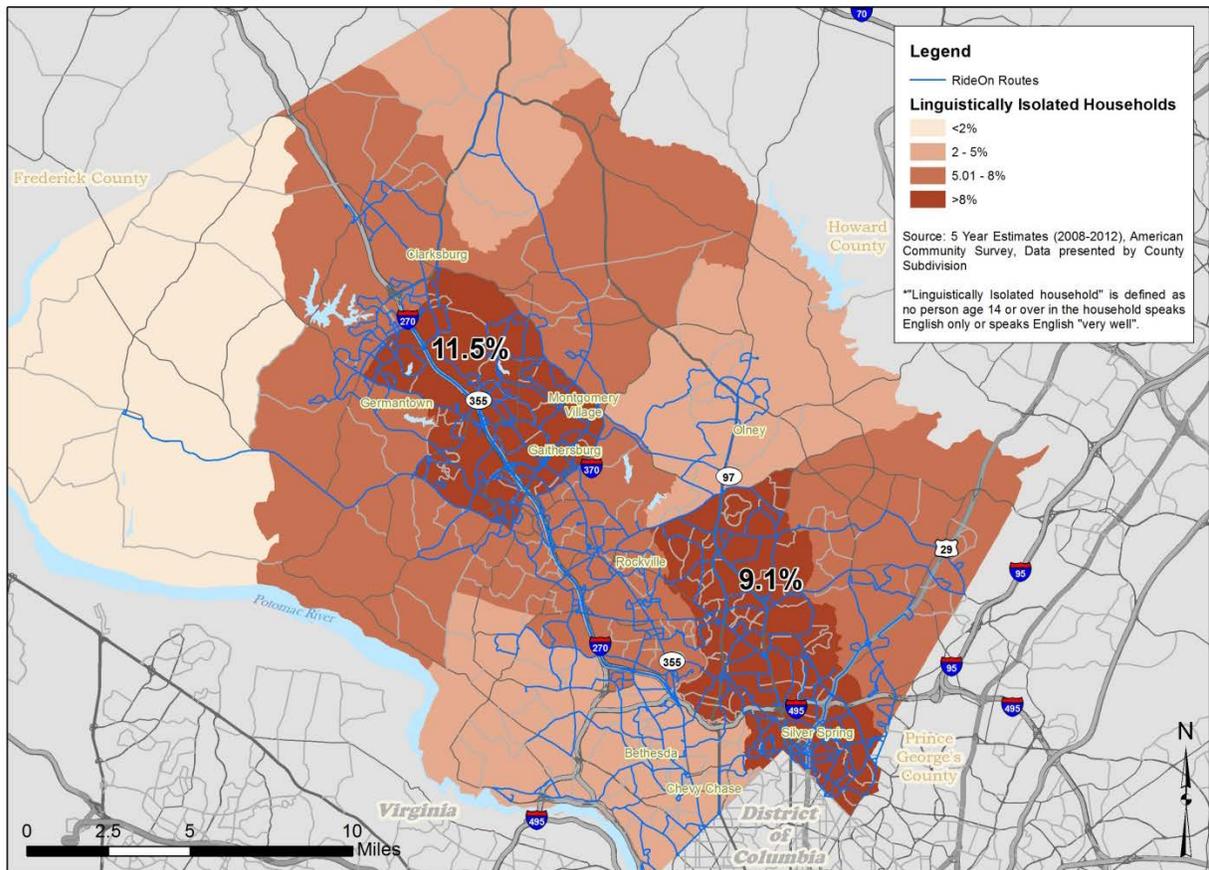
[1] households where no person age 14 or older in the household speaks English only or speaks English "very well".

Of the Montgomery County population age 5 and over that speaks a language other than English at home, approximately 139,000 speak English less than "very well". Spanish/Spanish Creole, Chinese, Korean, African languages, Vietnamese, and French (including Patois and Cajun) speakers make up the majority (approximately 80%) of the languages spoken at home among the subpopulation of people 5 years and over who speak English less than "very well". Table 2 shows the number and proportion of all languages spoken.

Table 2: Language Spoken at Home of Persons that Speak English Less than "Very Well" in Montgomery County (Population 5 Years and Over)

Language	Estimate	Percent		Language	Estimate	Percent
Spanish or Spanish Creole	66,472	47.7%		Arabic	1,145	0.8%
Chinese	15,880	11.4%		Urdu	1,025	0.7%
Korean	8,179	5.9%		Hindi	902	0.6%
African languages	7,255	5.2%		German	885	0.6%
Vietnamese	6,286	4.5%		Thai	885	0.6%
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	5,147	3.7%		Other Indo-European languages	837	0.6%
Persian	3,391	2.4%		Gujarati	830	0.6%
Russian	3,365	2.4%		Greek	779	0.6%
Tagalog	2,726	2.0%		Other Pacific Island languages	740	0.5%
Other Indic languages	2,721	2.0%		Italian	605	0.4%
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	2,179	1.6%		Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	515	0.4%
Other Asian languages	1,799	1.3%		Other (all languages below 500 LEP speakers)	2,187	1.6%
French Creole	1,428	1.0%		Total	139,391	100.0%
Japanese	1,228	0.9%				

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figures 5 – 10 help identify where the highest concentration of each of the top six languages of LEP persons (Spanish/Spanish Creole, Chinese, Korean, African languages, Vietnamese, and French (including Patois and Cajun)) are spoken. The figures show the percent of the population of each county subdivision that speaks the given language at home and speaks English less than "very well". Those subdivisions shown in red have the greatest percentage of the population with limited English proficiency that speaks the given language. These figures give reasonable guidance regarding the areas likely to have higher language assistance needs and for which languages the assistance is needed. We can be confident that those county subdivisions shown in red tones have higher concentrations of the given LEP population than those county subdivisions in green, but the rankings among subdivisions that have closer percentages may not hold true in reality. [2]

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[2] Note regarding data limitations: This calculation deals with some sub-populations that are small and in some cases the estimates come with a significant margin of error; therefore, the percentages presented in Figures 2-7 can be considered good enough to identify the areas with highest percentages of LEP, non-English speakers, but percentages should not be used as concrete figures to compare with other data.

Figure 5: Spanish Speakers with Limited English Proficiency (percent of population by county subdivision)

Figure 6: Chinese Speakers with Limited English Proficiency (percent of population by county subdivision)

Figure 7: Korean Speakers with Limited English Proficiency (percent of population by county subdivision)
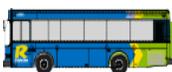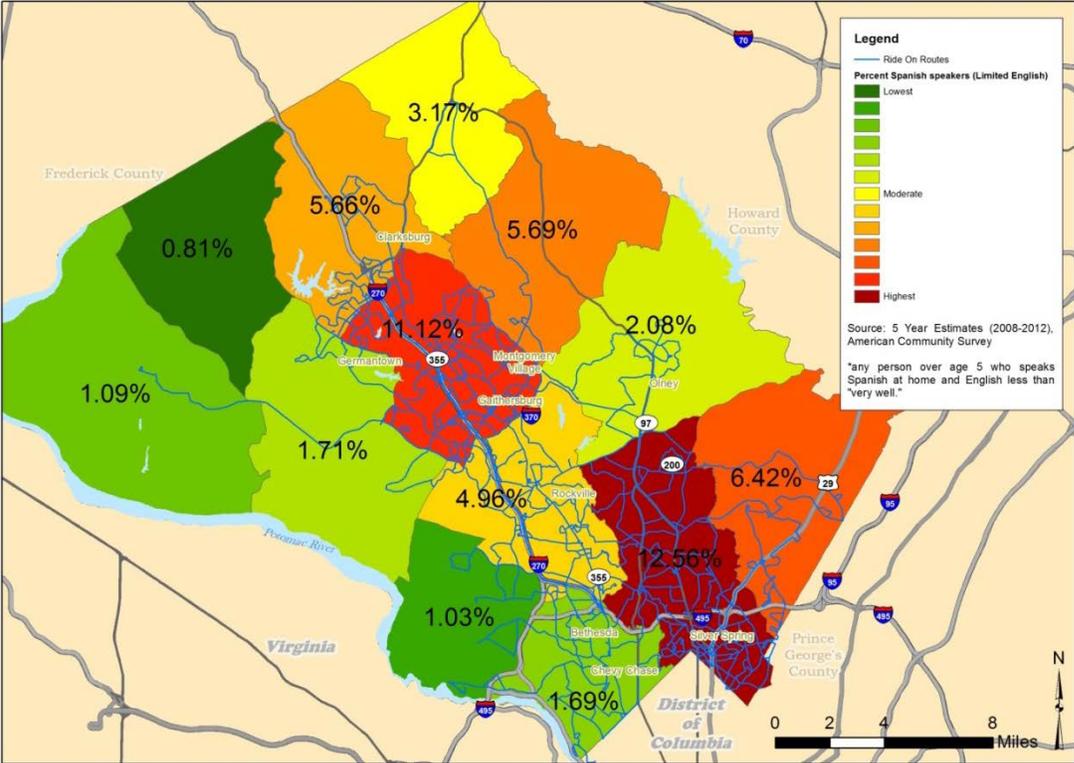

Figure 8: African Language Speakers with Limited English Proficiency (percent of population by county subdivision)

Figure 9: Vietnamese Speakers with Limited English Proficiency (percent of population by county subdivision)
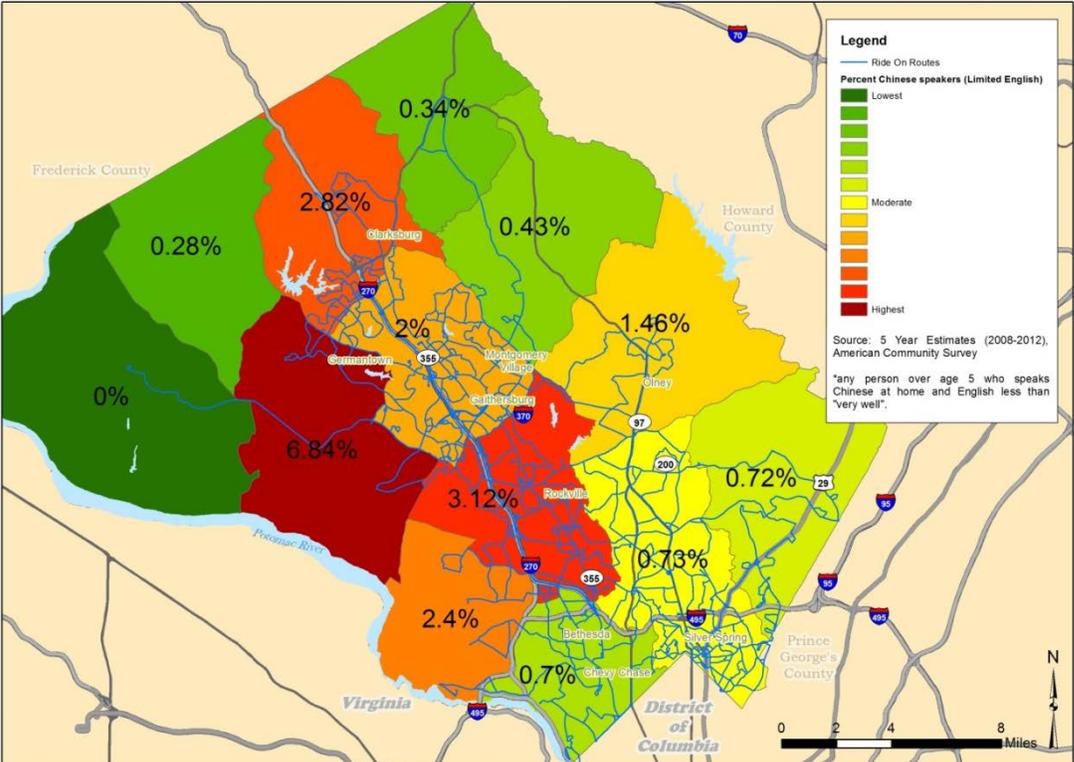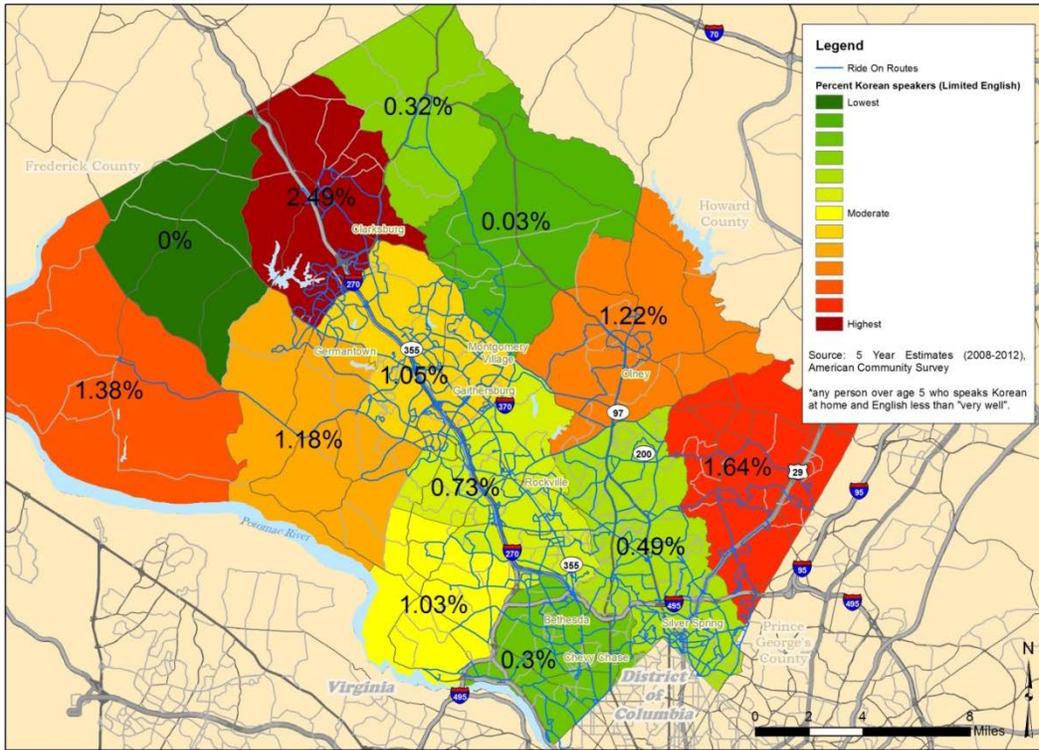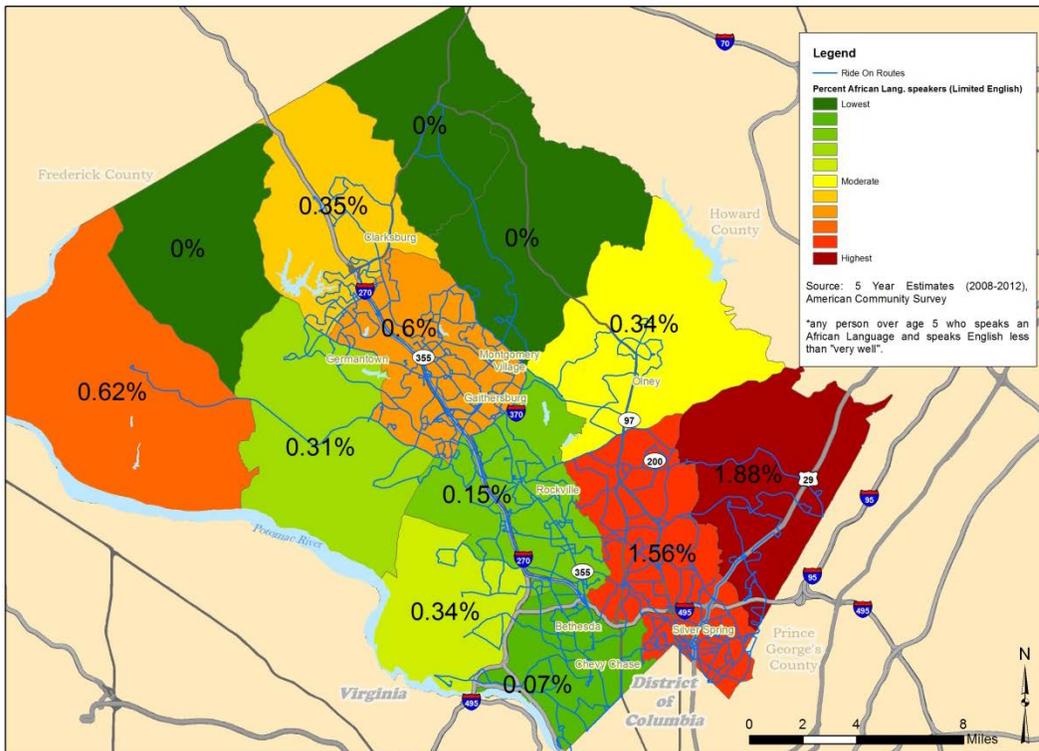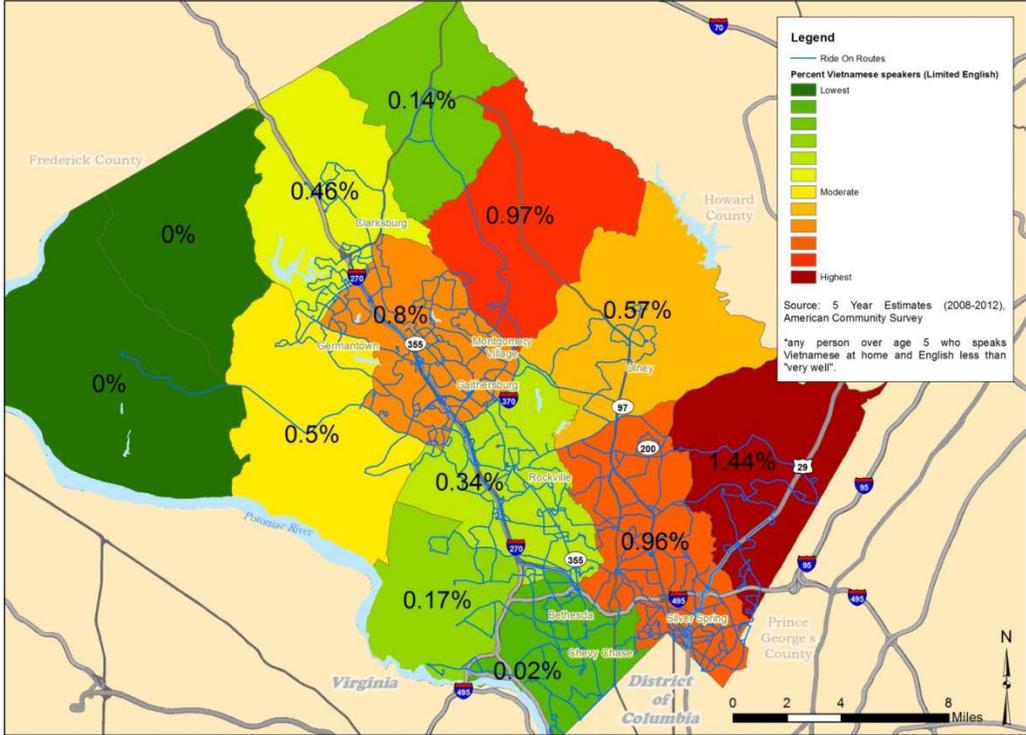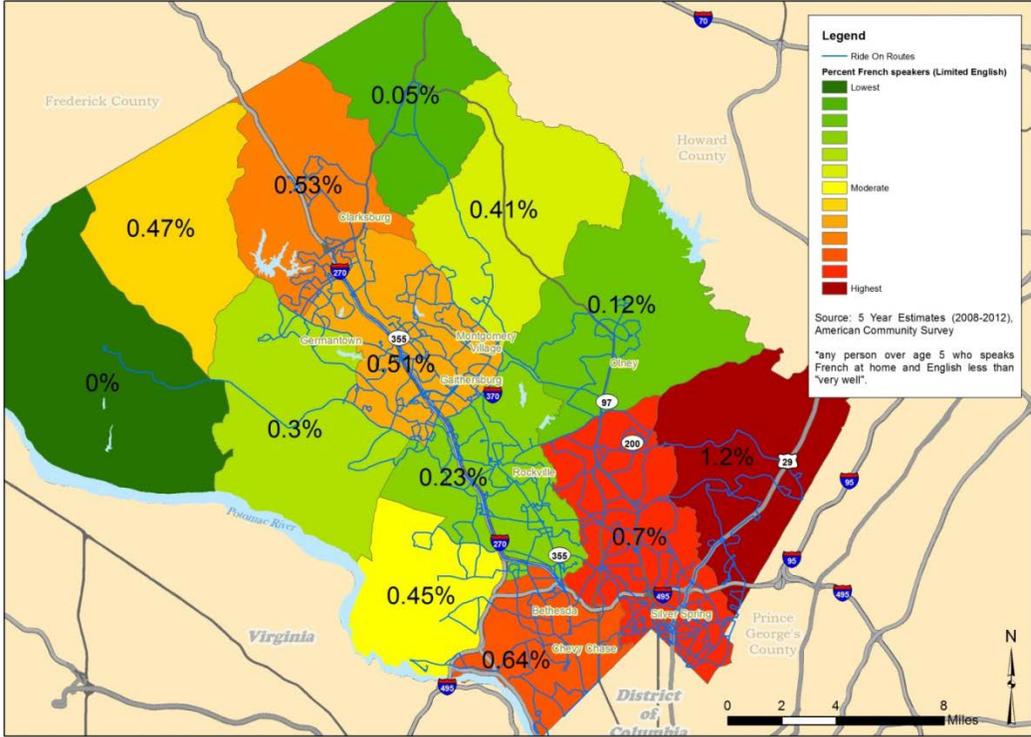

Figure 10: French Speakers (including Patois, Cajun) with Limited English Proficiency (percent of population by county subdivision)

6. Public Participation Survey Data and Analysis

The Ride On On-Board Survey and WMATA's Speak Up! It's Your Ride Survey and Outreach Campaign have been utilized to assist in developing public participation strategies.

Ride On On-board Survey

The Ride On on-board survey was conducted from July 28, 2014 to November 7, 2014. Surveys were available in the seven primary languages spoken in Montgomery County including English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Amharic, and French. Data collectors were instructed to ask customers to participate in the survey and hand each participating customer a small clipboard with the survey so that it could be completed on-board the bus. Of the 10,666 returned surveys, 9,500 were English, 1,030 were Spanish and 36 were in other languages. Not all respondents responded to each question so the number of responses by question varies. Table 3 tabulates the results by ethnic background. Of the respondents, 83% were minorities including 42% Black or African descent, 22% Hispanic, and 9% Asian.

Table 3: Ride On Ridership Ethnic Background

Ethnic Background	# of Responses	% of Responses
American Indian or Alaska Native	116	1.14
Asian	966	9.47
Black or African Descent	4,305	42.19
European Descent	1,687	16.53
Hawaiian of other Pacific Islander	28	0.27
Hispanic	2,226	21.82
Middle Eastern Descent	147	1.44
Other and Two or More Races	728	7.14
Total Responses	10,203	100.00
Blank or no response	463	
Total Surveys Returned	10,666	
Source: Ride On On-board Survey – December 2014		

Table 4 tabulates the results by household income. Note that 55% of respondents had annual household incomes less than $30,000.

Table 4: Ride On Ridership Household Income

Household Income	# of Responses	% of Responses
Less than $20,000	2,714	29.39
$20,000 to $29,999	2,395	25.93
$30,000 to $49,999	1,931	20.91
$50,000 to $74,999	825	8.93
$75,000 to $99,999	456	4.94
$100,000 to $149,999	474	5.13
$150,000 to $199,999	246	2.66
$200,000 or more	194	2.10
Total Responses	9,235	100.00
Blank or no response	1,431	
Total Surveys Returned	10,666	
Source: Ride On On-board Survey – December 2014		
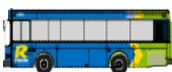
Table 5 tabulates the results by language usage

Table 5: Language Spoken at Home Other than English

Response	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	4,028	42.90
No	5,362	57.10
Total Responses	9,390	100.00
Blank or no response	1,276	
Total Surveys Returned	10,666	
Source: Ride On On-board Survey – December 2014		

Tables 6 and 7 tabulate language skill.

Table 6: Ability to Read English

Read English	# of Responses	% of Responses
Very Well	6,613	69.85
Well	2,183	23.06
Not Well	427	4.51
Not at All	244	2.58
Total Responses	9,467	100.00
Blank or no response	1,199	
Total Surveys Returned	10,666	
Source: Ride On On-board Survey – December 2014		

Table 7: Ability to Speak English

Speak English	# of Responses	% of Responses
Very Well	6,413	68.33
Well	2,295	24.45
Not Well	452	4.82
Not at All	225	2.40
Total Responses	9,385	100.00
Blank or no response	1,281	
Total Surveys Returned	10,666	
Source: Ride On On-board Survey – December 2014		

The data results are summarized that:

- 42.9% of respondents reported that they speak a language other than English at home

- 7.1% indicated that they read English not well or not well at all

- 7.2% indicated that the speak English not well or not well at all

The Ride On On-Board Survey asked questions about the use of smart phones and apps as well as the customer's preferred methods of communication. Table 8 tabulates the responses concerning the use of smart phones, Table 9 lists the preferred method of communication and Table 10 analyses the preferred method of communication by income group.

Table 8: Use of Smart Phones and Apps

Smart Phones and Apps	Yes	%	No	%	Total Responses	No Response
Do you use a smart phone and apps?	6,088	69.92	2,619	30.08	8,707	1,959
Do you use the Ride On Real Time App?	3,702	44.06	4,701	55.94	8,403	2,263
Do you use another transit app for Ride On Info?	1,420	17.67	6,618	82.33	8,038	2,628
Do you get text messages for Ride On bus times?	1,375	16.11	7,162	83.89	8,537	2,129

Table 9: Preferred Method of Communication

Preferred Communication	Responses	% of Responses
Twitter	542	7.50
Facebook	1,413	19.54
Email	3,675	50.83
Facebook / Email	783	10.83
Facebook/ Twitter	125	1.73
Twitter / Email	65	.90
All	234	3.24
Other	393	5.44
Total Responses	7,230	100.00
No response	3,436	
Total Surveys Returned	10,666	
Source: Ride On On-board Survey – December 2014		

Table 10: Preferred Method of Communication by Income Group

Preferred Communication	Less than $30,000	More Than $30,000	No Response to Income Question	All Responses
Email	41%	53%	28%	44%
Facebook	27%	23%	17%	24%
Twitter	8%	11%	7%	9%
Other	4%	4%	4%	4%
No Answer	34%	25%	54%	34%
Source: Ride On On-board Survey – November 2014				

For Ride On's transit customers that answered the question, 70% indicated that they use smart phones and apps. The customers that provided an answer indicated that email was the preferred method of communication with 66% of responses, while Facebook had 35% of responses, and Twitter had 12% of responses. In the other category which totaled 5% of responses, posting on the website and notices on the buses received a high number of responses.

WMATA- Speak Up! It's Your Ride Survey

As described in the WMATA Public Participation Plan (PPP) dated August 2014, Metro's PPP was developed through a year-long, multi-step process. During February through April 2014, WMATA conducted the Speak Up! It's Your Ride Survey and Outreach Campaign with 38 outreach events including 15 focus groups for community based organizations and 23 public

outreach events. Division of Transit Services staff participated in the WMATA PPP development and the outreach campaign.

The WMATA survey collected 3,513 responses. Of the respondents, 69% were minorities, 28% were low income, and 10% were LEP. WMATA's outreach identified customer communication preferences including:

- To involve Title VI populations, go where they are. Just 10 percent of individuals who participated in the PPP's outreach had ever been to a Metro public meeting. Holding events where minority, low-income, and LEP population are - at transit centers, CBOs, shopping centers, and festivals - is the most effective method for reaching these populations.

- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity. Know your audience and bring the appropriate Metro staff (subject matter, cultural and linguistic expertise) to events and meetings.

- Make it convenient to attend events. When asked what would make it easier to attend a meeting, all demographic and cultural groups except LEP populations chose the same top three options: location near work or home, convenient time of day, and near public transportation. LEP groups choose the use of interpreters instead of convenient time of day. Asian/Pacific Islanders, low-income, and LEP participants expressed a preference for meeting on weekends, instead of during the week.

- Tailor event formats to the preferences of groups whose input is sought. Meeting formats should be tailored to the preferences of individual groups or communities. White/Caucasian, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander survey respondents all indicated "Question and Answer Session" as their most preferred meeting format; Black/African American respondents selected "Show of Hands Voting." Electronic voting at events did not work well with senior citizens. All demographic and cultural groups selected surveys, open discussions, and question and answer sessions highly as preferred meeting formats.

- Translate materials and use graphics. Informational materials should be available in the target population's native language and should be designed to have graphics and minimal text.

- Use ethnic media and distribution outlets. Materials should be distributed through ethnic/racial media outlets and to locations that many riders frequent, including on the bus (Black/African American, Hispanic, low-income and LEP preferences), at bus stops, and at Metrorail Stations (all races, LEP and low-income populations). Materials should also be distributed to locations that are not necessarily transit related, such as CBOs, libraries, grocery stores, and residences.

- Newspaper advertising still works. All races, low-income and LEP respondents chose newspapers most often as a preferred way to receive community information; low-income and LEP respondents were far less likely to hear about events via the internet.

- Include children. Providing activities for children allows parents to attend and to be attentive. Acknowledge and use input. It should be explicitly evident how the public input will be used in decision making.

The key findings for future outreach include:

- Traditional public hearings / meetings do not work for many Title VI groups

- Meet people where they are

- Tailor strategies and staff to impacted populations

- Show the public their feedback is utilized

- Offer alternatives to online outreach which is often ineffective for low-income and LEP groups

- Use culture and language-appropriate media to reach diverse groups

- Develop, nurture and maintain relationships with Community-Based Organizations (CBO).

7. Regional Planning and Cooperation

Because of the multiple transit services within Montgomery County, coordination of public participation activities between the transit agencies is important. Marketing and public outreach staff of the MTA, WMATA and the Division of Transit Services should maintain regular communication and coordinate their outreach activities.

Maryland Transit Administration Public Participation Plan

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) developed its Public Participation Plan to guide the decision-making process when proposing certain service changes and fare increases subject to public comment. MTA developed the PPP with the flexibility to adjust appropriately and as needed to accommodate public involvement. Several MTA departments and offices have responsibilities for carrying out the plan including:

The Customer Relations Department serves as an advocate for customers regarding policies, service information, customer service related issues, recommendations, and system-wide construction and rehabilitation projects. Inclusive of this department is the Transit Information Contact Centers who work to resolve ongoing customer issues. InfoCom, a customer tracking system that documents customer comments, recommendations and suggestions. The Customer Relations Department also provides oversight of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (CACAT). community.

The **Community Relations Department** ensures the agency maintains a presence in the community by identifying low income, minority, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations, coordinating informational meetings, public hearings, and public outreach efforts. When MTA proposes service changes the department informs customers and communities, provides opportunities for public involvement and input, and responds to community-initiated concerns regarding transit issues. Community Relations staff is responsible for providing ADA accessible locations for all public meetings, translated written material, language interpretation service, and written material in alternate formats when requested (such as Braille and documents recorded on CDs).

The **Office of Public Affairs and Marketing** provides and produces multimedia marketing and communications materials that promote Maryland Transit Administration. Office of Public Affairs and Marketing uses state-of-the-art multimedia resources and tools to position the MTA as one of the nation's premier public transit providers. Office of Public Affairs

and Marketing's services support the MTA's strategic mission to offer riders excellence in transportation, communication, and public outreach. Office of Public Affairs and Marketing provides a wide array of services.

The **Office of Governmental Affairs** primarily focuses on legislative activities (State, Federal, and Local), Transit Policy and Technical Support, Constituent Services, Strategic Community Development, Administration of MDOT Workflow Correspondence System and Special Projects.

## *WMATA Public Participation Plan – August 2014*

WMATA identified proactive strategies that engage minority, low-income, and LEP communities; created a process and set of procedures that will facilitate inclusive participation; and developed a set of performance measures that will track whether the agency is reaching its desired outcomes. WMATA's PPP includes recommended strategies to ensure that Metro's public participation activities are effective, efficient and compliant with federal requirements for inclusive public participation. The strategies include:

- Public Participation Toolkit and Public Outreach Plan

- Performance Measures

- Public Participation Training

- Centralized Public Participation Office

Division of Transit Services staff has participated in the development of WMATA's PPP and will coordinate Ride On's public participation activities with WMATA.

8. Key Findings

1. Compared to the County's population, Ride On's ridership is more diverse, lower income and has a higher percentage of LEP persons. Key comparisons include:

   - While Montgomery County is very diverse with the minority population comprising 51% of the total county population, Ride On's ridership is significantly more diverse than the county as a whole with 83% minority.

   - According to the 2010 US Census, 6.5% of the County's residents are in poverty while 55% of Ride On riders reported a household income less than $30,000 per year.

   - The American Community Survey estimates that 39% of the county's population speaks a language other than English at home while Ride On ridership reported 45% speaking a language at home other than English.

2. The use of smart phones and apps is very high for the transit riders with 64% of respondents indicating that they use a smart phone with apps. When analyzed by income, 65% of riders with household incomes less than $30,000 make use of the smart phones with apps, while 73% of households with higher incomes reported use of smart phones with apps. While the use of smart phone with apps is high, there are still a significant number of Ride On customers who do not utilize the technology.

3. There are multiple ways to communicate with Ride On customers. According to the Ride On On-Board Survey, more customers prefer to receive notification about transit system changes through email than other media. While higher income riders have a slightly higher
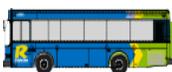
preference for email, riders with households incomes less than $30,000 also expressed a strong preference for communication by email.

9. Public Participation Activities and Methods

The Division of Transit Services' public involvement activities and methods will vary depending upon the type of project or public decision.

Public Participation Activities

Generally there are five types of public involvement activities including:

- **Ongoing Customer Communication** – Regular communication is needed to maintain dialogue with existing customers and to recruit new customers. Ongoing communication will focus on the website, Facebook page, periodic electronic newsletters, on-board advertising, and communication with community based organizations. The ongoing customer communication activities will seek to increase the number of email list serve participants.

- **Fare Policy Changes** – Ride On fare policy changes are normally led by WMATA. Public participation strategies will be coordinated with WMATA and will follow WMATA's public participation program.

- **Major Service Changes** – Public participation activities for major service changes will be directed to the affected customers. For new services, outreach will be focused through MNCPPC certified civic associations / HOAs and Montgomery County regional service centers. For service reductions communication will be focused on existing customers that will be adversely affected.

- **Capital Projects** – Each capital project is expected to require a different public participation strategy customized for the proposed project. Capital project public participation strategies will focus on communicating with citizens that may be adversely affected by the proposed project.

- **Planning Projects** – Short and long range planning projects may require public involvement and community outreach. Ride On planning projects may be coordinated with the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Planning project public participation strategies will focus on communicating with all citizens, especially minority, low income and LEP populations.

Public Participation Methods

The Division of Transit Services strives to proactively promote public involvement and to inform the public of current initiatives, issues and programs. The following methods include those used to inform, reach out to invite participation, and to seek input public input. They identify how each method could best be used and is based on input collected from the community and Division of Transit Services staff experience. The methods are not listed in priority order.

1. **Printed Materials Produced by Division of Transit Services -** Outreach information can be publicized in printed materials produced by the Division of Transit Services such as rider notices, car cards, flyers, posters, and banners. Based on experience, the Division of

Transit Services has found a combination of these methods, along with e-notifications, to be the most effective forms of notification.

2. **Ride On Website** - The Ride On website, http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/ is a communications tool providing substantial information about Ride On policies, strategies, plans, and methods. Ride On's website provides the option to translate many of the web pages into 84 different languages. Ride On also uses social networking applications such as Facebook and Twitter. Visit Ride On's Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/RideOnMCT or Twitter feed at https://twitter.com/RideOnMCT for more sources of updated information.

3. **Postcards and Letters Distributed by Mail -** Participation methods are occasionally publicized by letter or postcard distributed by mail. This can be an effective method for reaching a specific geographic area or population group.

4. **Station Information Resources -** Information resources may be located in WMATA stations and Ride On Transit Centers to communicate schedule and service information. Fixed and electronic postings in the transit stations and centers are also used to conduct outreach.

5. **Media Targeted to Ethnic Communities -** Participation opportunities are publicized through newspaper publications serving primarily English and Spanish speaking audiences. The Division of Transit Services also publicizes in other ethnic community media when applicable.

6. **Coordination with Community Events –** The Division of Transit Services hosts information booths to provide materials regarding its service and outreach methods at community events.

7. **Meetings with Civic and Community Organizations –** The Division of Transit Services works with civic associations / HOAs certified by the MNCPPC. As needed, the Division of Transit Services provides updates on its policies, projects, strategies, and methods by accepting invitations to participate in scheduled meetings of civic associations. These gatherings provide an opportunity to make a presentation, answer questions, and address issues.

8. **Informational Public Meetings –** The Division of Transit Services conducts several different types of meetings. Some meetings are designed to engage the public to provide their input, testimony, or comments regarding proposed changes. Venues for meetings should be fully accessible for persons with disabilities, and in general served by public transit. It is typical to conduct a series of meetings on a single topic. The Division of Transit Services considers the best areas or communities to conduct meetings and hearings by first examining the topic and/or the issues that may affect riders and communities. The Division of Transit Services secures meeting venues with consideration to time of day, length of time required for the meetings, and the number of expected attendees.

   8a. Meeting Formats

   - **Informational Open House -** This format provides opportunities for participants to receive information at their own pace by visiting a series of information stations

that may include table top displays, maps, Power Point presentations, photographs, visualizations, and other tools. Participants have the opportunity for one-on-one conversations with the appropriate Division of Transit Services staff. Occasionally open houses include a short educational presentation followed by a discussion period for comments and questions and answers. Participants are often given comment forms to provide written comments. Division of Transit Services staff is available to take verbal comments and transcribe them to provide a written record.

- **Public Hearings** – Public hearings are conducted to obtain formal comments for the public record. They are normally conduced with a hearing officer and a court reporter who transcribes the public comments. Public hearings may be conducted as a part of Montgomery County Council meetings.

8b. Community Meeting Considerations

- **Meeting Locations -** Locations are selected for the convenience and comfort level of the public. Typical venues include public libraries, local schools, colleges, and state or city owned buildings. The Division of Transit Services conducts all public participation activities at locations fully accessible to persons with disabilities and preferably, the venues should be served by public transit.

- **Meeting Times -** Public participation methods are scheduled at varying times of day and preferably on different days of the week. Typically meetings are conducted on weeknights after traditional work hours. Meetings conducted in the central business district are scheduled during traditional lunch hours with an additional hour or from noon until 6:00 PM.

9. **Partnerships with Community Based Organizations -** The Office of Community Partnerships has developed working relationships with several Community Based Organizations. These relationships expand the reach of the County's public involvement activities.

10. **Translation and Interpretive Services** – The Division of Transit Services works with translation services to translate written public information into other languages as needed. Prearranged onsite language interpretation service is provided upon request at public meetings/hearings.

11. **Ride On's Ongoing Public Participation Methods** - The Division of Transit Services promotes ongoing public participation with emphasis on outreach to low income, minority, and LEP populations. The Division of Transit Services conducts proactive outreach to expand the reach, inclusivity, and effectiveness of it transit services. Examples of ongoing methods include:

- Ride On website http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/
- Ride On Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/RideOnMCT
- Ride On communications via Twitter https://twitter.com/RideOnMCT
- E-notification system www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery
- Regular communications with media
- Press briefings and news releases
- Rider bulletins in WMATA stations at Ride On transit centers and on vehicles

- Language Line Services (LLS)
- Language interpreters at public meetings (when requested)
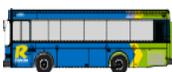
Appendix A – Public Participation Events FY 12 – FY 14

Meeting	Location	Date and Time	Advertisement	Attendees
Fiscal Year 2012				
Fare Change Public Forum	Council Office Building (COB)	April 24, 2012	Website, notices posted on buses, English and Spanish newspapers, email blasts	N/A
Fiscal Year 2013				
Service Change Public Forum	Executive Office Building (EOB)	September 27, 2012	Website, notices posted on buses, English and Spanish newspapers, email blasts	22
Service Change Public Forum	Highland Elementary School	April 17, 2013	Website, notices posted on buses, English and Spanish newspapers, email blasts	28
Service Change Public Forum	UpCounty Regional Service Center	September 26, 2013	Website, notices posted on buses, English and Spanish newspapers, email blasts	13
Fiscal Year 2014				
Service Change Public Forum	UpCounty Regional Service Center	September 26, 2013	Website, notices posted on buses, English and Spanish newspapers, email blasts	13
Fare Change Public Forum	Council Office Building (COB)	April 22, 2014	Website, notices posted on buses, English and Spanish newspapers, email blasts	N/A
Outreach Meetings	Chinese Cultural & Services Center	March 31, 2014	N/A	200
Outreach/Customer Appreciation Day	Lakeforest & Germantown Transit Centers	June 26, 2014	Twitter and Facebook posts	300

Appendix B – Montgomery County Community Based Organizations

Organization	Address	City	Services 1	Services 2	Services 3	Services 4	Services 5
African Immigrant & Refugee Foundation	11350 Baroque Road	Silver Spring	African Comm.				
American Cancer Society - Silver Spring Office	11331 Amherst Avenue	Silver Spring	Medical	Disabilities			
Asian American LEAD	10111 Colesville Road	Silver Spring	Asian Comm.				
Asian American LEAD (AALEAD)	11141 Georgia Avenue - Suite 515	Wheaton	Asian Comm.				
Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center	11141 Georgia Avenue - Suite 215	Silver Spring	Asian Comm.	Legal Resources			
Bethel World Outreach Church	8242 Georgia Avenue	Silver Spring	Comm. Help Org.	General	Education	Religious	African Comm.
Carribean Help Center	10140 Sutherland Road	Silver Spring	Comm. Help Org.	Carribean Comm.			
CentroNia - Maryland	1345 University Boulevard E.	Takoma	Spanish Comm.	Education			
Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity - Maryland	11319 Elkin Street	Wheaton	Community Ctrs	Government			
Chinese Cultural and Community Service Center	9366 Gaither Road	Gaithersburg	Asian Comm.				
Church of the Redeemer	19425 Woodfield Road	Gaithersburg	Women/ Family	General	Youth Org.	Religious	Education
Community Family Life Services - Milestone Place	1010 Grandin Avenue, Suite A	Rockville	Community Ctrs	Medical	Religious		
Community Ministries of Gaithersburg	9075 Comprint Ct.	Gaithersburg	Community Ctrs	Religious			
Community Ministries of Rockville	1010 Grandin Avenue	Rockville	Community Ctrs	Religious			
Community Support Services	9075 Comprint Ct.	Gaithersburg	Community Ctrs	Disabilities			
Covenant Life	7501 Muncaster Mill Road	Gaithersburg	Women/ Family	General	Youth Org.	Religious	Skills/ Job Training

Organization	Address	City	Services 1	Services 2	Services 3	Services 4	Services 5
African Immigrant & Refugee Foundation	11350 Baroque Road	Silver Spring	African Comm.				
American Cancer Society - Silver Spring Office	11331 Amherst Avenue	Silver Spring	Medical	Disabilities			
Asian American LEAD	10111 Colesville Road	Silver Spring	Asian Comm.				
Asian American LEAD (AALEAD)	11141 Georgia Avenue - Suite 515	Wheaton	Asian Comm.				
Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center	11141 Georgia Avenue - Suite 215	Silver Spring	Asian Comm.	Legal Resources			
Bethel World Outreach Church	8242 Georgia Avenue	Silver Spring	Comm. Help Org.	General	Education	Religious	African Comm.
Carribean Help Center	10140 Sutherland Road	Silver Spring	Comm. Help Org.	Carribean Comm.			
CentroNia - Maryland	1345 University Boulevard E.	Takoma	Spanish Comm.	Education			
Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity - Maryland	11319 Elkin Street	Wheaton	Community Ctrs	Government			
Chinese Cultural and Community Service Center	9366 Gaither Road	Gaithersburg	Asian Comm.				
Church of the Redeemer	19425 Woodfield Road	Gaithersburg	Women/ Family	General	Youth Org.	Religious	Education
Community Family Life Services - Milestone Place	1010 Grandin Avenue, Suite A	Rockville	Community Ctrs	Medical	Religious		
Community Ministries of Gaithersburg	9075 Comprint Ct.	Gaithersburg	Community Ctrs	Religious			
Community Ministries of Rockville	1010 Grandin Avenue	Rockville	Community Ctrs	Religious			
Community Support Services	9075 Comprint Ct.	Gaithersburg	Community Ctrs	Disabilities			

Organization	Address	City	Services 1	Services 2	Services 3	Services 4	Services 5
Maryland Multicultural Youth Centers	1320 Fenwick Ln. Suite 600	Silver Spring	Education	Youth Org.			
Mongtomery County Health and Human Services	8818 Georgia Avenue	Silver Spring	Government	Medical	Social Services		
Montgomery Aquatic Center	5900 Executive Boulevard	North Bethesda	Government	Community Ctrs			
Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL)	12320 Parklawn Drive	Rockville	Skills/ Job Training	Education			
Montgomery County Refugee Center (Montgomery College)	8561 Fenton Street , Suite 210	Silver Spring	Skills/ Job Training	Education	Social Services		
Montgomery County Transit - RIDE ON	101 Monroe Street - 5th Floor	Rockville	Government				
Montgomery County, Office of Community Affairs	401 Hungerford Drive, Fifth Floor	Rockville	Government				
Montgomery County, Office of Community Partnerships	225 Rockville Pike	Rockville	Government				
NST Myosenji Temple	310 University Boulevard, West	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Office of Community Partnerships	2424 Reedie Drive	Wheaton	Spanish Comm.	Comm. Help Org.	Government		
Organization of Chinese Americans	P.O. Box 10433	Rockville					
Parent Encouragement Program (PEP)	10100 Connecticut Ave.	Kensington	Women/ Family				
PSI Family Services	8401 Connecticut Avenue	Chevy Chase	Comm. Help Org.	Women/ Family			
Rockville Volunteer Fire Department	P.O. Box 1547	Rockville	Government				
Self Help for Hard of Hearing	7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200	Bethesda	Disabilities		Skills/ Job Training	Social Services	
Sligo Seventh Day Adventist Church	7700 Carroll Avenue	Takoma Park	Youth Org.	General	Women/ Family	Religious	

Organization	Address	City	Services 1	Services 2	Services 3	Services 4	Services 5
Spinal Cord Injury Network of Metropolitan Washington	14 Wolf Drive	Silver Spring	Disabilities	Medical			
The Arc Montgomery County - Maryland	11600 Nebel Street	Rockville	Disabilities	Senior Comm.			
The Nature Conservancy of Maryland/DC Office	5410 Grosvenor Lane	Bethesda	Government				
Washington Ear	12061 Tech Rd.	Silver Spring	Disabilities	Medical			
Washington International Japanese Church	13008 North Commons Way	Potomac	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Congregation Or Chadash	24800 Kings Valley Rd	Damascus	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Washington Buddhist Temple	20900 New Hampshire Ave	Brookeville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Beth Messiah Congregation	20300 Pleasant Ridge Dr	Montgomery Village	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Kehilat Shalom	9915 Apple Ridge Rd	Gaithersburg	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Ohev Sholom Talmud Torah	18320 Georgia Ave	Olney	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
B'Nai Shalom	18401 Burtfield Dr	Olney	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Chabad Of Olney	17320 Georgia Ave	Olney	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Shaare Tefila Congregation	16620 Georgia Ave	Olney	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Tikvat Israel Congregation	2200 Baltimore Rd	Rockville	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
American Zen College	16815 Germantown Rd	Germantown	Religious	Education			
Shaare Torah Congregation	1409 Main St	Gaithersburg	Religious	Jewish Comm.			

Organization	Address	City	Services 1	Services 2	Services 3	Services 4	Services 5
Temple Beth AMI	14330 Travilah Rd	Rockville	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Chabad Lubavitch	11520 Darnestown Rd	Gaithersburg	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Kemp Mill Synagogue	11910 Kemp Mill Rd	Silver Spring	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Service Jewish Center	11703 Monticello Ave	Silver Spring	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Silver Spring Learning Center	1401 Arcola Ave	Silver Spring	Education	Jewish Comm.			
Young Israel Shomrai Emunah	1132 Arcola Ave	Silver Spring	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Congregation Har Tzeon Agudath Achim	1840 University Blvd W	Silver Spring	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Burma-America Buddhist Association	1708 Powder Mill Rd	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Shirat Hanefesh	8814 Kensington Pkwy	Chevy Chase	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Beth Sholom Congregational and Talmud Torah	11825 7 Locks Rd	Potomac	Religious	Jewish Comm.			
Shri Mangal Mandir	17110 New Hampshire Ave	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Vedanta Center of Greater Washington, DC	3001 Bel Pre Rd	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
ISKCON of Washington, D.C.	10310 Oaklyn Dr	Potomac	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Islamic Center of Maryland	19411 Woodfield Rd	Gaithersburg	Religious	Community Ctrs			
Muslim Community Center Mosque	15200 New Hampshire Ave	Silver Spring	Religious	Community Ctrs			
Idara-e-Jaferia Islamic Center	3140 Spencerville Rd	Burtonsville	Religious	Community Ctrs			

Organization	Address	City	Services 1	Services 2	Services 3	Services 4	Services 5
Islamic Society of the Washington Area	2701 Briggs Chaney Rd	Silver Spring	Religious	Community Ctrs			
Islamic Education Center	7917 Montrose Rd	Potomac	Religious	Education			
Bait-ur-Rehman Mosque	15000 Good Hope Road	Silver Spring	Religious				
United Korean Presbyterian Church	7009 Wilson Ln	Bethesda	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Korean Baptist Church	310 Randolph Rd	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Hahnuri Baptist Church	800 Randolph Rd	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
New Hope Korean Church	15121 McKnew Rd	Burtonsville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
First Korean Prebysterian Church	1011 Maple Ave	Rockville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Korean Presbyterian Church of Rockville	800 Hurley Ave	Rockville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Washington Spencerville Korean	1700 Spencerville Rd	Spencerville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Bethany Presbyterian Church	1201 Quince Orchard Blvd	Gaithersburg	Religious	Asian Comm.			
St Andrew Kim Catholic Church	17615 Old Baltimore Rd	Olney	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Chinese Christian Church	7716 Piney Branch Rd	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Montgomery Chinese Baptist	12221 Veirs Mill Rd	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Maryland Chinese Baptist Mission	5100 Randolph Rd	Rockville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Mustard Seed Chinese Baptist Church	12801 Falls Rd	Rockville	Religious	Asian Comm.			

Organization	Address	City	Services 1	Services 2	Services 3	Services 4	Services 5
Chinese Bible Church-Montgomery	4414 Muncaster Mill Road	Rockville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Japanese Ministry of First Baptist Church Rockville	55 Adclare Rd	Rockville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Japanese Christian Community Center	1099 Rockville Pike	Rockville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Washington Japanese Christian	7611 Clarendon Rd	Bethesda	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Our Lady of Vietnam Parish Silver Spring	11812 New Hampshire Ave	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Hoa Hao Buddhism Congregational Church	585 University Blvd E	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Burma-America Buddhist Association	1708 Powder Mill Rd	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Dharma Realm Buddhist Association	9601 7 Locks Rd	Bethesda	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Kunzang Odsal Palyul Changchub Choling	18400 River Rd (PO Box 88)	Poolesville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Mahamevnawa Monastery	5004 Stone Road	Rockville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Wat Thai of Washington D.C.	13440 Layhill Rd	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Nichiren Shoshu Myosenji Temple	310 University Blvd W	Silver Spring	Religious	Asian Comm.			
True Buddha Temple Maryland	1930 Spencerville Rd	Spencerville	Religious	Asian Comm.			
Tsrha Tsion Mahebere Baleweld Inc	3603 Chevy Chase Lake Dr apt #1	Chevy Chase	Religious	African Comm.			
Damascus Spanish SDA Church	9600 Main St	Damascus	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
Montgomery Village Spanish SDA	19300 Watkins Mill Rd	Montgomery Vlg	Religious	Spanish Comm.			

Organization	Address	City	Services 1	Services 2	Services 3	Services 4	Services 5
Gaithersburg Spanish SDA Church	303 Chestnut Ave	Washington Grove	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
Iglesia de Rockville / Church of Rockville	55 Adclare Rd	Rockville	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
Iglesia Centro Cristiano de Rockville	5906 Halpine Road	Rockville	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
Rockville Spanish SDA Church	2208 Rockland Ave	Rockville	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
Wheaton Spanish SDA Church	3101 University Blvd W	Kensington	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
Four Corners Spanish SDA Church	33 University Blvd E	Silver Spring	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
Emanuel Spanish Baptist Church	832 Wayne Ave	Silver Spring	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
Tacoma Park Spanish SDA Church	8400 Carroll Ave	Takoma Park	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
Oxon Hill Spanish SDA Church	6400 Livingston Rd	Oxon Hill	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
First Hispanic Church of God	14720 New Hampshire Ave	Silver Spring	Religious	Spanish Comm.			
Source: WMATA – 2014							

RIDE ON